

the United States. Their independence and creativity have been an essential component of the American success story, adding immeasurably to our economic strength. Greek American cultural values have enriched our communities and added to the diversity we cherish as Americans. I hope that you will join me in saluting Greece and Greek Americans in this 185th anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

TRIBUTE TO BEA WATSON

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today in tribute to a most distinguished member of the Fontana community and my dear friend, Bea Watson.

In recognition of Bea's outstanding achievements and contributions to our community, I am pleased to share with you a few of her numerous recognitions, including the honor of over twenty-two prestigious awards. These include two esteemed Congressional Awards, the Fontana PTA Council Award, the Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Volunteer Award, the California Parks and Recreation Award, the Community Spirit Award, and the title of California Legislature Woman of the Year. Bea is held in high esteem by all who have been touched by her tireless devotion to others, and deserves every accolade we may present her in thanks for her service.

I am endlessly grateful for Bea's involvement on behalf of the citizens of her community. As a member of the California League of Cities, the Fontana Unified School District, the Fontana Chamber of Commerce, the Fontana Women's Club, the Fontana Teen Center, and the Fontana Historical Society, Bea has profoundly influenced the impacts of these organizations and has directed efforts to improve the community. As City Clerk of Fontana, Bea has proudly represented the city, serving as the keeper of the City Seal and of the official city documents.

Bea's commendable dedication to the City of Fontana has nurtured a sense of pride among her fellow citizens. Her efforts have touched the lives of her neighbors and her exceptional impact upon our community will create a lasting legacy for generations to come. Bea's enduring commitment, enthusiasm, and concern for others' wellbeing have advanced women's rights, education, the arts, and the spirit of the Fontana community. As a volunteer, public servant, and friend to her community, Bea has proven herself as an exemplary American. Bea continues to serve as an inspiration to us all.

I thank Bea for dedicating her life to serving on the behalf of the Fontana community. I am honored to consider Bea my friend and I truly appreciate all she has given to our community and our country.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, March 25th, the people of Greece celebrated the 185th anniversary of their independence from the Ottoman Empire.

As the brilliant Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote in the preface to *Hellas* in 1821, "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece." Nowhere is this more true than in America, a country crafted to embody the vision and ideals of the ancient Greeks, and home to more than three million citizens of Greek descent.

The building in which we now stand, along with many prominent structures in our Nation's Capital, draws heavily on the architecture of ancient Greece, and is a fitting tribute to the civilization that provided the model for our own democratic experiment. America's founders were deeply inspired by the heroic individualism of Homer's epic poetry, the search for truth embodied by Socrates, and the passion for justice that guided Greek political theory.

The American Revolution was driven by the Greek idea that the authority to govern derives directly from the people, and this successful assertion of autonomy in turn inspired Greece to declare its independence on March 25, 1821, after nearly 400 years of rule by the Ottomans. Weeks later, the Messinian Congress sent a letter to then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams asking for moral support, asserting: "Your virtues, Americans, are close to ours, although a broad sea separates us." In response, stirring speeches by President James Monroe and Daniel Webster led the Congress to send funds and supplies to aid the Greeks and motivated many Americans to fight alongside the Greeks in their struggle for freedom.

Today, history, mutual respect, and shared values continue to strengthen the alliance between Greece and the United States. After fighting side-by-side in every major war of the 20th century, we are now united in the war against terror that poses a threat to liberty and justice everywhere. Together we have stood up to the forces of oppression in conflicts from World War II to the Persian Gulf, we have joined as strategic partners in NATO, and are working to build peace, stability, and democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Unfortunately, not all Greeks are celebrating their independence this week. In one of the most militarized regions in the world, members of the Greek Cypriot community continue to live under conditions of oppression, harassment, and deprivation imposed by some 35,000 Turkish soldiers. I am disturbed that Turkey continues to defy the international community and the U.N. resolutions with its policies towards Cyprus.

If a solution to Cyprus can be finalized it would reshape the eastern Mediterranean and could lead to an improvement in relations between Greece and Turkey. I am saddened by the persistence of tensions between these two neighbors, both of which are strong friends of the United States and vital partners in NATO and the war on terror. I hope that a negotiated agreement will soon be reached, so that

Greeks everywhere can realize the inherently human desire for freedom.

I also support the reunification of the remains of one of the most magnificent and best-known monuments in the world: the Parthenon. I welcome the announcement last month that the British and Greek governments have engaged the Director General of UNESCO to lead a cooperative approach to resolving the issue of the Parthenon Marbles. I congratulate both parties for the shift in focus from contentious restitution to cooperative reunification and look forward to the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, where all the Sculptures will be displayed as close to their original position as possible.

The United States' kinship with the Greek people was reflected in the enthusiasm with which America embraced modern Greece's fight for independence 179 years ago. Similarly, the American ideal of freedom has drawn generations of Greek men and women to America's shores. Today we celebrate and give thanks for the contributions Greek Americans and their devotion to family, faith, community, and country that has enriched our Nation.

Through decades of challenge and change, the shared admiration, cooperation, and friendship between Greece and the United States has endured and deepened, and together we have proved the fundamental truth of the Greek proverb, "The passion for freedom never dies." Today we reaffirm that sentiment and our commitment to promoting liberty, democracy, and justice in America, in Greece, and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy and admiration that I wish the people of Greece a happy Independence Day and continued freedom and prosperity.

185 YEARS OF GREEK
INDEPENDENCE

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 185th anniversary of Greek Independence. I would also like to make a special honor of Congressman BILIRAKIS, who is celebrating his last Greek Independence Day as a Member of the House of Representatives. I commend him for his service not only to our country but his indefatigable support of Hellenic issues. I know he will be missed not only by his constituents in Florida, his colleagues here and by all Hellenic Americans.

March 25th is a date that will live in the hearts and minds of Greeks all around the world. After close to 400 years of Ottoman rule, on March 25, 1821, the people of Greece rose up against the Turks and won their independence.

The Greeks have a history dating back almost 4,000 years. Greece is the cradle of democracy and its great philosophers were an invaluable inspiration for our founding fathers. In ancient Athens they found a model for the new democracy that our forefathers used to establish our democracy in America.

We are joined by blood, culture, and a profound commitment to shared values. Greek ideals of democracy and freedom inspired our